

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
FEBRUARY 20, 2019
7:00 P.M.
SUFFIELD TOWN HALL
83 MOUNTAIN ROAD, SUFFIELD CT**

Present: Melissa M. Mack, Joanne Sullivan, Tim Reynolds, Mel Chafetz and Pete Hill

First Selectman Mack called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectman Mack expressed her deep appreciation to Highway Foreman Mark Cervione and the Highway Department for working tirelessly to keep our residents safe and our roads clear as they continue to cover each winter storm that has hit us this season.

Approval of the Minutes from the February 7, 2019 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Water Pollution Control Authority

Selectman Hill motioned to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2019 Special Meeting of the Board of Selectmen and the Water Pollution Control Authority. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of the Minutes from the February 13, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Hill motioned to table the approval of the Minutes from the February 13, 2019 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

Jackie Hemond, 230 Fairhill Lane (Suffield Resident & Kent Memorial Library Director) - “I am concerned and I would like you to look again at the library budget that has been revised by Melissa. There are two points that I am really concerned about. When we go back to 50 North Main Street; and we are going back, our book budget has stayed the same and I think it should increase. When we deleted the books because of the PCB contamination, we were promised \$30,000 and I haven’t seen any mention of that so I am really concerned about the book budget. Another thing is that I had asked for a promotion for three people and that is not reflected in the budget. The total for the three is \$950 which is about \$300 each for the year. It just seems like we should do that. The Library budget is incredibly small so our 6% looks big but it’s really not.”

John Murphy, 18 Downing Way – “With Ned Lamont in office and all the proposed taxes he’s been putting through the last six weeks or so, one in particular are the tolls. I have been working very hard and I am involved with the “No Connecticut Tolls” movement and I was involved with

Enfield as they tried to get a resolution together opposing the tolls. In Enfield the Town Council voted and passed a resolution last night. I was out there last night on the corner of Elm Street protesting the tolls. There were protests occurring all throughout the state. What I find most amazing is most people are still in denial that tolls are coming and/or they have no idea to the extent of what is going on. If you look into it, they cannot do truckers only, they have to do everybody because it's constitutionally required and the Federal Government is calling the shots in the State of Connecticut because we took money when we took the tolls down twenty years ago. So that is why when you see a picture of the proposed tolls you will find 82 tolls in the State of Connecticut. They are even talking about putting a toll across the bridge into Enfield and down the 140. How many times do we go to Enfield? Many! I just find that it is an overreach. I think that when you google all the proposed taxes and then google what are the proposed expense cuts...zero! We live in a state where they are not even addressing the expenses. We don't have a revenue problem in the State of the Connecticut; we have an expense problem and a spending problem. This is one thing, I don't know where it's going to go, but I am going down fighting. I'm fighting all across the state and I went to Enfield and worked on Enfield and I would like to have the Town, it was better not based on Republican or Democrat, but to come to the Town and have a resolution from the Town opposing it. I was just asking if the Town would consider making some type of ceremonial proclamation that we are opposed to having tolls because of what it is going to do to our roads and our congestion. I think it is just awful and one of the worst things they can possibly do. I am not opposed to tolls the way it used to be where you would have them on the turnpikes spaced with 30 miles in-between. We cannot do what Massachusetts does as they own their tolls. It seems to be working for them but it's not an option. With this scenario people will not be able to go anywhere without paying something. For people who travel for business it will be outrageous.

Discussion

Selectman Reynolds: *"John, you are asking our board to come up with some type of resolution?"* **John Murphy:** "Yes, town-wide."

First Selectman Mack: *"If we wanted to entertain it tonight we would have to amend the agenda to get it on and then take action."*

John Murphy: *"No, that's fine. I don't know when they are going to vote on this. I just wanted to jump on it since I knew there was a meeting tonight and I wanted to get it in front of you."*

First Selectman Mack: "I would be happy to discuss it. I think it definitely warrants further review. I will get some research on the topic and get some more information on it and we can discuss it. As a comment, I agree with your position. I live on Main Street, as does at least one of my colleagues here, and we already have an enormous traffic problem. We have so many state roads in Town, so many through roads that are already extremely congested. I am all ears on this."

Discussion and approval of MOU with Town of Southwick addressing the Southwick Local Permitting Program assessment on Suffield property owners on the Congamond Lake

- First Selectman Mack noted that this subject had been discussed at a prior meeting and the Board was in favor in principal. The items that remained were to figure out what the cost would be. Attorney Donnelly discussed this with Southwick's Legal Counsel and First Selectman Mack meet with Southwick Select Board Member Douglas Moglin and Karl Stinehart, Southwick's Chief Administrative Officer, to finalize negotiations.
 - The Town of Suffield will pay the Town of Southwick \$2,000 for the FY 2019-20.
 - The Town of Suffield will pay the Town of Southwick an additional \$200 increment annually for the remaining 4 years; a 5 year contract.
 - The \$2,000 dollar amount seems appropriate as last year Southwick collected approximately \$1,230 with a 33% compliance rate.
 - A review of the high end versus the low end was conducted with estimated compliance and backing out some of the administrative fees (i.e. postage, follow-up, staff time, etc.) Both towns were in agreement that this would be fair to all to not require Suffield residents to pay for their docks. We are going to "agree to disagree" about the authority of the state of Massachusetts and Town of Southwick to assess this on our residents.
 - The one item that we are very clear on is that this would not relieve Suffield residents who have docks, moorings, etcetera in Congamond Lake from their requirement of complying with Massachusetts law on the water. For example, it does not alleviate, for public safety purposes, if their dock is too far out and it is a safe passage issue. They will need to remedy those situations to be in compliance with Massachusetts safety laws. Forms would still need to be filled out for public safety issues; however, it will no longer be necessary for the assessment to be paid by Suffield residents.
 - The consideration is the public safety services Southwick provides by being the first responders on Congamond Lake and for making sure people are complying with all regulations on the Lake.
 - Southwick will consider approval of the agreement once it is approved this evening.
 - No Board of Finance approval is required because it is within the Board of Selectmen's authority and will be an annual budget appropriation.

Selectman Reynolds motioned to approve the MOU with Town of Southwick addressing the Southwick Local Permitting Program assessment on Suffield property owners on the Congamond Lake in the amount of \$2,000 for FY 2019-20 with an incremental increase of \$200 thereafter for the next four years. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and approval of FY 2019-20 Board of Selectmen's Budget

First Selectman Mack explained that she and Finance Director Deb Cerrato had gone back and taken another look at the budget since last week's Board of Selectmen meeting presentation.

- The revised current budget reflects a \$438,942 increase over last fiscal year which equates to a 2.81% increase.
- BOF asked for a 2.2% increase overall which means an additional \$94,722 would need to be shaved from the current budget to hit that mark.
- First Selectman Mack feels that there is nothing left to take from the current proposed budget.
- The budget increase is mainly comprised of:
 - Primarily payroll increases including contractual
 - \$321,045 in benefits and insurance increases
 - \$62,000 in public utilities
 - We are in various stages of union negotiations with several town unions: Police, Fire, Library, Dispatch and Town Hall
 - Expected increase to health care cost benefits of approximately 15% for the Town, taking into consideration changes to the employee portion of the premium cost share
 - Reviewed the last five years of line items in every single account in every department to find savings based on the last five years of utilization of funds.
 - We have reached a point where there is nothing left to cut.
 - The ACCE budget is separate and will be presented to the Board of Selectmen at the March 6, 2019 Regular Meeting. The ACCE prioritization meeting is being held tomorrow and as soon as the documents relating to the outcome of that meeting are available they will be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen for review.
 - The budget needs to be approved this evening in order to present it to Board of Finance in compliance with Town Charter deadlines on Monday evening.
 - Selectman Reynolds questioned whether we had any idea what to expect for revenue. First Selectman Mack explained that Deb Cerrato was doing analysis and had not completed it as of yet but she would bring it to the board when ready.

Selectman Chafetz stated that he had a few questions regarding the budget and although First Selectman Mack had given a breakdown at the last meeting, he did not necessarily remember all she said.

Selectman Chafetz asked for detail on the following budget items:

- **\$17,000 increase to the Elections budget.** First Selectman Mack walked through the columns of the spreadsheet to explain what each column represented. The line Selectman Chafetz was referencing was not the increase line. The process by which the Town Registrars calculate their budget was explained and based on the fact that this is not an election year and a 5 year review showed a \$5,000 to \$6,000 unused payroll amount, the Elections budget was actually reflecting a decrease for the FY 2019-20.
- **Tax Collector decrease.** First Selectman Mack explained it was due to the tax law change from last year, which resulted in a large number of rebates due to prepayment of taxes.
- **Police Commission increase.** First Selectman Mack explained it was due to the budgeting of two cruisers instead of one.

- **Animal Control increase.** First Selectman Mack explained that we share Animal Control services with East Granby. The department has been restructured over the last few years. We invested in training, professionalism and coverage. Now that we have been able to collect reliable data regarding the AC services, we have extended one of the positions. In FY 2019-20 the town of East Granby will be contributing an additional \$5,000 commensurate with their number of calls. This revenue is not reflected on the expense sheet being reviewed but will be listed as revenue.
- **Public Utilities increase.** First Selectman Mack explained that one of the reasons is due to the fact that we had not been charged over the last few years by Aquarian. This oversight on Aquarian's part will result in an approximately \$40,000 swing as we will now be charged moving forward.
- **Solar Savings** First Selectman Mack will provide an update on savings when available. It has been difficult to track as the billing cycle is not monthly; however, we are currently working on this.
- **Library update.** First Selectman Mack appreciates the points outlined by Library Director Jackie Hemond; however, the fact remains that the overall Selectmen's budget still needs to be reduced by \$95,000 in order to meet the Board of Finance's directive of a 2.2% increase.
- It must be taken into consideration that although the Library budget is only increasing by \$4,000 this year, the piece that is not assigned to each of the departmental budgets is their pro-rata share of their employees' employee benefits and insurance. That expense is going up by a huge amount and it has to be accounted for in that overall 2.2% increase being requested by the Board of Finance.
- Last fiscal year, the Library's operating budget alone increased by \$34,000 which is a pretty significant increase.
- Today, First Selectman Mack learned that the \$7.7M capital budget for the renovations, which we are presently at zero, will require an additional \$15,000 to be paid to Fuss & O'Neill to do another piece of the remediation reporting to EPA and DEEP. The costs are continuing to mount for this project.
- In addition, we have tried to do all the infrastructure things that have been requested by the Library Director, even if they are a little bit different than the original scope of the project. We are trying to do as much as we can for the Library. Yes, the capital budget of \$7.7M did include \$30,000 for the books. Right now, however, we need to comply with EPA and DEEP, we need electricity, we need shelving, we need all the structural things that will be required to open up this Library, and those items have to take priority over the \$30,000 in books. We will definitely get more books at some point, and the library has an annual operating book budget which is still intact. First Selectman Mack recommends getting back into Kent Memorial Library, figure out what we need, what we need to prioritize and come up with a new budget going forward.
- If it comes to the fact that a lot of the children's books were discarded due to PCB's, we can certainly do a book drive similar to what is done at the schools where you purchase a book in honor of a person or a family. We can certainly come up with a creative way to purchase some books, but at this point in time, the budget will not sustain another \$30,000.
- There is a possibility that we could put it into capital as a capital investment. First Selectman Mack has this on her list of items to bring up at the ACCE meeting tomorrow.

This would be in addition to the landscaping, the exterior painting, the exterior brick repointing and the picture rails that will all be going into capital budget for the Library for this coming fiscal year budget.

- The Library is still getting quite a few capital projects next year because simply we needed the money that is earmarked in the \$7.7 M to cover change orders and overages on the necessary infrastructure work and had to defer exterior projects.
- Anything that does not have to happen prior to the Library opening is getting pushed to the next fiscal year's capital budget.
- First Selectman Mack wants to be clear that we are not yet out of the woods with the testing at the Library. The process continues. There could still be more costs; however, we are hoping that these issues can be dealt with in the current budget.
- Selectman Chafetz stated "I understand your frustration and you need to get it open, but whenever we build anything though you still have to operate a building and usually the capital expenditures stay separate from that and books are really a part of the library."
- Selectman Chafetz requested permission to ask Library Director Jackie Hemond (in audience) a few questions. First Selectman Mack agreed.

Discussion

Selectman Chafetz: *"How many books were destroyed? Do you know approximately?"*

Jackie Hemond: "I think it was close to 40,000. It's hard to tell right now."

Selectman Chafetz: *"So when we open what will the shelves look like?"* **Jackie Hemond:** "We have been buying continuously, but it will be less. We have less book shelves."

Selectman Chafetz: *"How much do you buy annually?"* **Jackie Hemond:** "Probably 15,000 books."

Selectman Chafetz: *"At an average cost of what?"* **Jackie Hemond:** "Children and adult books are different but it probably averages out to about \$20."

First Selectman Mack: *"Let's remember that many of the books we discarded were the non-fiction books, encyclopedia type items that we would not be replacing. I am all for books but we have to at least present the Board of Finance something close to what they have requested or they will start cutting."*

Jackie Hemond: *"I just want to emphasize that our budget is .83% while everybody else's budget is much larger."* **First Selectman Mack:** "Jackie, you received a \$34,000 increase last year." **Jackie Hemond:** "But we needed it."

Selectman Hill: *"I remember this. Melissa Mack went back to the Board of Finance and they were upset. We wanted to change something with positions."*

First Selectman Mack: *"Yes, it was two part-time positions. We found a fantastic employee and wanted to retain him so we made one position. I went to the Board of Finance to request an off-cycle change even though we had just done it and I was lambasted, but we did it and here we*

are. Again, I think we have got to finish this project, we've got to get back in, and we've got to celebrate what we have, regroup, come up with a new list and move forward to get what we need. We just can't have everything all at once."

Selectman Reynolds: *"Can we get donated books?"*

Selectman Chafetz: *"Probably can't donate books. They get different books than you and I buy. They buy library editions."*

Jackie Hemond: *"Let me add to that because we do take donated books as the Friends of the Library have a donation every month. The staff looks through the donated books and adds books from the collection that comes in. The remaining books go to Friends of the Library for the annual book sale. They provide the library approximately \$18,000 to use for programming."*

- **Cemetery update**
 - The project will be moving forward after budget season is completed.
- **Charter Review**
 - First Selectman Mack has \$10,000 currently earmarked for Charter Review. She would like to request that some of this money be moved to the 350th Anniversary line item which currently has only \$1,000 allocated. This would be seed money for the 350th Anniversary Committee, as they will be doing fundraisers throughout the year. If Charter Review requires additional funds we can dip into Legal Fees if necessary. The 350th Anniversary Committee does not have a budget at this time although they are working on it. Selectman Chafetz suggested moving \$4,000 from the Charter Review line item to the 350th Anniversary Committee.
- **Budget Difference**
 - First Selectman Mack explained the \$30,000 difference between the first and second versions of the budget presented from last week was a result of :
 - A part-time position in the Tax Collector budget was accidentally budgeted for 29 hours instead of 21 hours resulting in \$15,000 savings.
 - Adjusted Public Works budget for an overstated item resulting in \$15,000 savings.

Discussion

Selectman Chafetz – *"I assume you've built in to hire a Director for Public Works?"* **First**

Selectman Mack – "No, but let's talk about the staffing there. In fact I discussed it today with Mark Winzler and Bill Hoff over at the schools."

Selectman Chafetz – *"Who is Mark Winzler?"* **First Selectman Mack** – "He is the Interim Superintendent and Bill Hoff is the Business Manager. If you recall a few months ago they asked me if I would be interested in discussing combining Facilities, Public Works and the Highway Department because there are economies of scale that could happen there. They have been working very well together lately. When Julie Oakes left they asked if I would be

interested in those conversations and I said, “absolutely”. Preliminary discussions with Mark Cervione, Chris Matejek and Larry Plano have taken place and they will be continuing those conversations. Right now Chris Matejek is doing a phenomenal job, really picking up all the balls that were left for him. He is doing great! I would like to see if we can make something work with the schools before rushing in to fill that position; however, if it turns out that it is not going to work, I would certainly add it back in.”

Selectman Chafetz – *“But you still need somebody because there would need to be some compensation for whatever arrangement.”* **First Selectman Mack** – “One thing I have seen is that when managing our projects we need to build in a Project Manager. Without question, it is something we need to do. That was one of the functions that were covered by the two positions in Public Works that is now just one position. If we do that, and the schools can take a more active role in managing projects such as the school roof projects, it might work. The relationships between all parties have become much more compliant and collaborative. I think we have the people and the resources; we’ve just got to come up with a structure that would work. Again, if it doesn’t work we will look at filling the position. We do have money in contracted services we could reallocate but there is no specific money earmarked at this time for an employee.”

Selectman Sullivan – *“You cut the Town Counsel budget.”* **First Selectman Mack** – “Yes, because a lot of big things have been resolved. We have a set amount every month based on routine legal needs and we built in a few bigger things. We anticipate that on the Labor Counsel side for Union Negotiations, due to all the work that has been done over the last three years getting the contracts in pretty good shape, a lot of the negotiations moving forward will be wages and benefits which means we hopefully will not be spending as much in legal fees for negotiations. I did put money in for the Pension Ordinance and Plan Review. We need to make sure all issues are cleaned up in that respect.”

Selectman Reynolds motioned to approve the FY 2019-20 Board of Selectmen’s Budget as presented with a change to the Charter Review budgeted amount of \$10,000. The change results in \$6,000 allotted to Charter Review line item and \$4,000 allotted to the 350th Anniversary line item. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and appointment of member to the Central Regional Tourism District through March 31, 2021

First Selectman Mack explained the position, which was formerly held by Lorraine Erickson of the Lily House.

- Central Regional Tourism District, Inc. represents 65 towns and cities including Suffield by CT State statute.
- Each Board of Selectmen, Board of Aldermen or City Council in each of the 65 towns may appoint one representative to serve on the Bureau’s Board of Directors. The appointment as mandated by state statute is for a two-year term. The appointment should be to the Central Regional Tourism District, Inc. The mission of the District is to

promote leisure, business, group and corporate travel to the region, in keeping with the values of the individual communities we serve.

- The Board of Directors meets five times a year, January, March, May, September and November.

Selectman Reynolds motioned to appoint Gayle Demko as a member of the Central Regional Tourism District through March 31, 2021. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Open Public Hearing on 2017-18 Annual Report on Thursday, February 21, 2019

Selectman Reynolds motioned to open the Public Hearing on the 2017-18 Annual Report on Thursday, February 21, 2019. Vote: 5-0 in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

Selectmen Updates

Planning and Zoning Listening Sessions

The Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) is beginning the process of updating the 2010 Plan of Conservation & Development (POCD). To start the process the PZC is hosting a series of listening sessions to discuss the current plan. The first session will be held on Wednesday, February 27th at 7PM in the SVAA training room at 205 Bridge Street. This session will deal with conservation issues which are generally covered in pages 13-30 of the POCD. There will be two more sessions which will cover the sections of the POCD related to development and infrastructure issues.

RFP Town Hall Update

The final review of the Town Hall RFP will be conducted tomorrow night at the Permanent Building Commission meeting. The RFP should be issued on Friday.

Kent Memorial Library Update

First Selectman Mack, Chris Matejek and Joe Sangiovanni had a conversation today with Bob May and Helen from Fuss & O'Neill about the status of the PCB remediation testing and compliance plan required by EPA and DEEP. Also discussed during the conversation was the report that will need to be completed once final clean test results have been received. The report will be completed by Fuss & O'Neill and sent to EPA and DEEP. We are submitting in satisfaction of what they have asked us to do. As the work progresses, First Selectman Mack will keep everyone posted on timelines.

The recent water issues at KML turned out to be a leak in the irrigation system, which has since been fixed. It should not be a problem moving forward.

Highway Garage Update

Nothing new to report at this time, however, there should be an update at the next Board of Selectmen meeting in two weeks.

Parks and Recreation Update

Final interviews were conducted and an offer was made and accepted. Parks and Recreation Director Pete Leclerc will make the announcement soon.

Suffield High School Boys Track Team – State Open Championship

Selectman Reynolds noted that the Suffield High School Boys 400 x 800 Track Team recently won the State Open Championship and broke the record for best time. This is a major accomplishment that should be recognized. Selectman Reynolds would like to have the Board of Selectman recognize this outstanding accomplishment by presenting them with proclamations from the town. All Selectmen agreed. The members of the team will be invited to a future Board of Selectmen Meeting where they will be presented with their proclamations.

Public Comment

None

Selectman Reynolds motioned to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:03 p.m.

The next regular Board of Selectmen Meeting will be Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen O. Lambert
Recording Secretary